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## **CLAIMS**

1. An apparatus (1) for sorting packages, comprising means (2) for supplying the packages to at least a station (3) for their manipulation and orientation, characterised in that the manipulating station (3) comprises at least a manipulator head (7) having at least two degrees of freedom of motion.

- 5 2. An apparatus as claimed in claim 1, characterised in that the manipulator head (7) is movable by translation according to the axes of an orthogonal Cartesian triad.
  - 3. An apparatus as claimed in claim s 1 or 2, characterised in that the manipulator head(7) is movable by rotating about a substantially vertical axis.
  - 4. An apparatus as claimed in claim 1, characterised in that the manipulator head (7) comprises gripping means to displace the packages.
  - 5. An apparatus as claimed in claim 4, characterised in that the gripping means are grippers provided with gripping appendages (8a;8b), a first appendage (8a) being integral with the structure of the manipulator head (7) and a second appendage (8b) being integral with a rod (9) which can slide inside a corresponding cylinder (10) obtained in the structure of the head (7).
  - 6. An apparatus as claimed in claim 1, characterised in that the means (2) for supplying the packages to the manipulating station (3) comprise a pair of conveyor belts (4;5).
  - 7. An apparatus as claimed in claim 6, characterised in that each conveyor belt is associated with:
- 20 at least an actuating motor;

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- at least a sensor for counting the RPM of the motor;
- at least a photocell for detecting the presence of a package on a belt;
- at least a processor.
- 8. An apparatus as claimed in claim 1, characterised in that it comprises a plurality of

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manipulating stations (3), each of which is provided with a manipulator head (7) having at least two degrees of freedom of motion.

- 9. A method for putting in step packages conveyed by conveyor belts set side by side, characterised in that it comprises the following steps:
- 5 detecting the package positioned ahead;

measuring the RPM of an actuating motor of a first belt whereon the package positioned ahead is located;

increasing a counter as a function of the RPM of the motor of the first belt;

decreasing the velocity of advance of the first belt as a function of the value assumed by

10 the counter;

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sensing the alignment of the packages;

measuring the RPM of an actuating motor of a second conveyor belt whereon the package positioned behind is located;

decreasing the counter according to the RPM of the motor of the second belt;

- increasing the velocity of advance of the second conveyor belt as a function of the value assumed by the counter.
- 10. A method as claimed in claim 9, wherein the detection of the package positioned ahead and the sensing of the alignment of the packages take place by means of at least a pair of photocells.